

Mrs Kucks' Confectionery

This shop is named after Mrs Sibilla Kucks who sold sweets and fancy cakes in her Liebig Street shop from 1873 until the 1880s. Sibilla operated one of Warrnambool's earliest dedicated confectionery shops at a time when sweets were more commonly found in a fruiterer's shop. Her window display would have been full of brightly coloured sweets in shiny glass jars tempting passers-by.

Sibilla (née Leyendecker) married Johann Wilhelm Kucks in New York, USA in 1856. Both were originally from Prussia. They sailed to Australia on the *Ocean Rover* and arrived in Melbourne June 10th, 1858. Seventeen days later their second child, William Jnr., was born.

Warrnambool's population was around 2,000 in 1859 when Sibilla and Johann (known as "William") settled here. William was employed as a tailor by Cramond & Dickson. In 1859 the couple bought George Fergusson's bakery in Timor Street and opened it as "*W. Kucks Baker*". Along with fancy breads and biscuits, he advertised baked dinners to order. William supplied bread to the Warrnambool Hospital until the 1880s.

In 1873 William built a row of four shops at 140-146 Liebig Street, one of which became Sibilla's confectionery shop, and another was the new home to *W. Kucks Baker*. William and Sibilla had five other children. By 1896 their sons William Jnr. and Henry operated the business as "*Messrs Kucks Bros., Bakers & Confectioners*". They employed six staff and used three carts for deliveries over a thirty mile radius. They catered for clubs and functions including the Exhibitors' Picnic Luncheon for the Warrnambool Industrial and Arts Exhibition (1896-7). In 1907 *Messrs Kucks Bros.* baked a monster Pyramid Cake for a local bazaar. It contained coins of various sizes and weighed 84lbs (38kg). Everyone buying a slice hoped to be lucky enough to end up with a coin! William Kucks Jnr. also became licensee of Terang's "*Wheatsheaf Hotel*", its name and logo connecting it to the family's bakery in Warrnambool.

The photograph of William Kucks Snr. appears on the commemorative Warrnambool Pioneers Board, on display at Heritage Works in Warrnambool. The Warrnambool and District Historical Society houses two medals and a certificate awarded to members of the Kucks family. Kucks Street, named after William Kucks Snr. was amalgamated with other streets in 1975 to become Merrivale Drive. Several local sports clubs have a Kucks trophy.

William (1825-1911) and Sibilla (1833-1910) Kucks and three of their seven children are buried at the Warrnambool Cemetery in a family grave.



"W. Kucks Baker" in same row of Liebig St shops as Mrs Kuck' shop – image courtesy of Warrnambool and District Historical Society